

August 15, 1967

Sir Peter Medawar, F.R.S.
National Institute for Medical Research
London, N.W. 7, England

Dear Peter:

I am sorry to have been so tardy in answering you about Alan Richter.

Inasmuch as I have had no important contact with him for at least ten years, I am not sure what I can tell you that would be very relevant to his present qualifications. As a graduate student he was extremely bright, imaginative, impulsive, and almost completely lacking in self-criticism. The things that were wrong with him were those that are very often cleared up by any kind of normal maturation process, but I have not had enough recent observation of him to know whether or not the expected has taken place. I do know that he had a very fast-operating intellectual apparatus, and I could not help but bewail the fact that I had to cope with it at a stage when it was not tempered by some of the other requisites for the most constructive performance in the laboratory and for the easiest of interpersonal relationships. Since this may sound rather negative, I should stress that there was a rare quality of bold imagination too. So I do hope you may be able to get a favorable report on his further development which has followed rather different lines than his thesis work.

Hilary Koprowski and Wacker should be able to fill you in on this.

With best regards,

Sincerely yours,

Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Genetics

P.S. It is almost exhilarating to see how rapidly the public and legislative mind can catch up with contemporary reality when once it gets started. I have in mind the new abortion legislation in England, as well as in California, and perhaps most remarkable of all, the very liberal stand that has suddenly been adopted by the American Medical Association.

MEDAWAR, Peter

J. Lederberg
1965

See follow-up lt from Medawar -